

Seegert (US 5937625) in view of Streicher (US 4310997). The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

Claim 1 states that the draft rod is movably connected between the deck and the portion of the frame to limit upward vertical movement of the deck relative to the frame to a predetermined upper stop location. In Seegert the draft rod 34 merely limits downward vertical movement. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Seegert of the draft rod 34 being used to limit upward vertical movement. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed. Likewise, dependent claims 2-9 are patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 10 states the lawn mower comprises the mounting section of the deck having a limiter for limiting downward rotation of the limiting bar. In Seegert, the rod 34 is clearly free to rotate downward relative to the deck 14 without any limitation. Streicher discloses a pair of support arms 70 and two hitch arms 80. When the lift rods 88 are raised (see col. 3, lines 52-65) the hitch arms 80 are contacted by the surface plates 72 of the support arms 70 to stop upward pivotal movement. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Streicher of the support arms 70 limiting downward rotation of the two hitch arms 80. Thus, even if the teachings of Streicher are combined with Seegert, the features of claim 10 are still not disclosed or suggested. The features of claim 10 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 10 is patentable and should be allowed. Claims 11-18, dependent upon claim 10, are likewise patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 19 states that the limiting bar comprises a stop surface located between the deck and the frame for limiting longitudinal movement of the bar through the hole in the frame. Seegert shows the rod 34 having enlarged loop section at 36 (see Fig. 3). However, as can be seen in Fig. 1 and 2, the enlarged loop section will not come near the structural member 46 (see Fig. 5). If it did, the belt 20 would become too loose for the lawn mower to work. There is no disclosure or suggestion (except after reading the present patent application) of a limiting bar comprises a stop surface located between the deck and the frame for limiting longitudinal movement of the bar through the hole in the frame. The features of claim 19 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 19 is patentable and should be allowed. Dependent claim 20 is also patentable and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicant's Attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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9/27/02

Date

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Carolynn Wise
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Appendix

Application No.: 09/934,860

Marked Up Specification Replacement Paragraph(s)

Page 8, line 30 - Page 9, line 22:

The present invention provides an upward direction deck stop limiter feature for the deck 20 without having to add additional components. Unlike the prior art which had to add additional components to prevent the deck from hitting the engine pulley, the present invention uses redesigned existing components to [provided] provide this upward direction deck stop limiter feature. More specifically, in the embodiment shown, the draft rod mounting section on the deck has been redesigned to include a downward rotational limiter (i.e., the tab 68) to limit downward rotation of the draft rod relative to the deck in direction E. The embodiment shown also has a redesigned draft rod with an longitudinal movement limiter (i.e., the enlarged section 46) for limiting the longitudinal movement of the draft rod through the hole 62 in the member 60 in direction C. Therefore, with the redesigned draft rod 40 and draft rod mounting section 64 on the deck 20, there is no longer a need for additional components to be attached to the frame for limiting upward vertical movement of the deck. This feature is accomplished by the new redesigned draft rods and redesigned draft rod mounting sections on the deck. The reduction in the number of parts decreases cost

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associated with the manufacture of those parts, their storage, and their assembly with the lawn mower.

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* * * COMMUNICATION RESULT REPORT (SEP. 27. 2002 3:41PM) * * *

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REASON FOR ERROR
E-1) HANG UP OR LINE FAIL
E-2) NO ANSWER
E-3) MAIL BOX FULL
E-4) NO FACSIMILE CONNECTION

E-2) BUSY
E-4) NO FACSIMILE CONNECTION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT(s): McClain, M.

SERIAL NO.: 09/934,860

ART UNIT: 3671

FILED: 8/22/2001

EXAMINER: Torres, A.

TITLE: Lawn Mower Deck Vertical Movement Limiter

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: 002A.0032.U1(US)

Assistant Commissioner For Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Amendment

Sir:

This is in response to the Office Action mailed 8/20/2002 (Paper No. 2) in regard to the above-identified patent application. Please amend the Application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please delete the paragraph(s) starting on page 8, line 30 through page 9, line 22 and replace with the following replacement paragraph(s):

The present invention provides an upward direction deck stop limiter feature for the deck 20 without having to add additional components. Unlike the prior art which had to add additional components to prevent the deck from hitting the engine pulley, the present invention uses redesigned existing components to provide this upward direction deck stop limiter feature. More specifically, in the embodiment shown, the draft rod mounting section

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NO. 696 P. 1

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT(s): McClain, M.

SERIAL NO.: 09/934,660

ART UNIT: 2671

FILED: 8/22/2001

EXAMINER: Torres, A.

TITLE: Lawn Mower Deck Vertical Movement Limiter

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: 002A.0032.U1(US)

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Amendment

Sir:

This is in response to the Office Action mailed 8/20/2002 (Paper No. 2) in regard to the above-identified patent application. Please amend the Application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please delete the paragraph(s) starting on page 9, line 30 through page 9, line 22 and replace with the following replacement paragraph(s):

The present invention provides an upward direction deck stop limiter feature for the deck 20 without having to add additional components. Unlike the prior art which had to add additional components to prevent the deck from hitting the engine pulley, the present invention uses redesigned existing components to provide this upward direction deck stop limiter feature. More specifically, in the embodiment shown, the draft rod mounting section

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